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QUATRAINS,

BY JAMES GEORGE JENNINGS,

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By the same writer :

(VERSES) FROM AN INDIAN COLLEGE,

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"He might yet do good work, could he but learn the old lesson that the obscure is not necessarily the profound."—*Athenæum*.

QUATRAINS

BY

J. G. JENNINGS.

*" Animula vagula, blandula,
Hospes comesque corporis,
Quæ nunc abibis in loca
Pallidula, rigida, nudula ?"*

The Emperor Hadrian.



ALLAHABAD :
INDIAN PRESS.
1901.

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TO
MISS AGNES JACKSON

WHOSE SYMPATHY AND ACTIVE HELP HAVE RENDERED

THE WRITER

HER OBLIGED DEBTOR.

ALLAHABAD, *April*, 1898.



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QUATRAINS.

I

The moon from out her leafy lattice peeps,
Then clasps the bars again and softly creeps

Questionings;
whence arise at
different times
the following
thoughts.

Out of her darkling palace to clear sky,
While all the chequered plain in silence sleeps.

The heavy seed patters like coming rain
From leaf to leaf; the owl her note of pain

Cries shrilly, and the leathern wings of the bat
With floating cloud the sheeny pathway stain.

A far bell throbs soft to the pulse of time
From unseen tower its solitary chime.

Lone temple in a land of other gods,
Dreaming of home amid an alien clime!

The bell has ceased, but in its echoes I
Hear questionings of immortality.

The wings of Time beat soft upon the air,
Whence carrying us, and whither, as they fly ?

II

i.

Whence is that inner prompting, that still word,
Loud as a clarion, soft as leaf but stirred

Upon a terrace by the autumn wind—
Or soft or loud, of speech that will be heard ;

Crying " Oh, rise and labour ! Sweet is rest ;
But ease that follows share in toil is best.

All other ease is but foul idleness.
Sweet, sweet is ease—such ease as toil has blest !"

Small are man's needs, were man content to lie
Warm in foul rags, and feed, and lust, and die,

And leave a memory to a careless kin
Writ as a cloud upon a summer sky.

Love and con-
science, more
than need, bid
man work.

Greater his need, would he lie warmer,

Feed daintily, or if his pulses stir

To joys more delicately habited,

So that his pampered senses not demur.

But above need is man's dear fellowship,

That hallows to his thought the tenderer lip,

Kissing his harsher kisses into love ;

And the child's hand, strong in its feeble grip.

These from his rougher fellows he would shield,

Or train the eager boyish hands to wield

Arms and defence, that they may stand above

Him, when he falls upon his fatal field.

ii.

If there be God above, surely on me

He turns at times his eyes' solemnity,

And gazes long upon my labour done,

And judges it—ah, shame ! ah, misery !

Work and comradeship are
natural.

If there be God—O God, each act of mine,
Each wish, each thought, each breath, must still be
thine !

Naught in the universe can lie without
Thy circling love—save in thy wrath divine.

And if no wrath be His, and ire were ill
Of man's own heart transferred to Godhead, still,
Does not man labouring in a wider field
Than self, or own, his need of love fulfill ?

Not to be Thine were harm enough to flee,
Though heavenly wrath an evil figment be.

Who still could view God bear the cross, and
say,
“ His be the load ; let him not turn to me ”?

III

i.

Soft mother-voices from the far-off years
Come stealing back into our manhood's ears,
Still singing sweet and low their simple creed.
Ah, come, and childhood come, and gentle tears !

Belief and
prayer may be
traditionary
only.

“ Baby, baby love, join thy hands and say
—Nay, love, cease, love ; cease but awhile to play—
And after Mother dear her words repeat
—So, love, sweet love ; 'tis unto God we pray.

“ Say ‘ God, dear God, the skies thy dwelling are ;
Heaven is thy dwelling, yet thou art not far,
For thou art everywhere, by me and Mother,
In all the world, in sun, and moon, and star.

“ ‘ All earth and heaven are thy kingdom wide ;
Thine is the daylight, thine the eventide.

All these thou guardest, though thou art unseen ;
Grant that thy child, too, in thy love abide.

“ ‘My sins forgive me, that were done to-day ;
Grant that my grief may wash their stains away. ’

Father, receive me in thy love again ;
Thy path, my path, oh, guide my feet that stray !

“ ‘And now, God, dear God, let thy love alight
On all our near ones through the lonely night.

Lay thy fingers of sleep upon our lids,
And by our pillows place thine angels bright ’.”

High heaven may be but simple mother’s lore,
That by all mothers has been taught before ;

Though dearly welcome to the soul of man,
The love of God a sweet tale, nothing more.

Age cannot still the voices that of old
Of heavenly love and heavenly sorrow told

To little ears ; for yet they sing, they sing ;
And we must hearken, though our hearts be cold.

—God is not seen by us in these late days ;
 And who from heavenward have returned, that praise
 Its every glory with a tongue that cries,
 “Oh, rouse, and labour !” through our crowded ways ?

 Know we then God and heaven by proof so sure,
 That for the hope of them we still endure
 Toil—and the meed for toil, unproved, perchance
 The dreamer’s word, the visionary’s lure ?

ii.

Some say, “O heart ! thy words are old, thy tongue
 The words of
 Unbelief.
 Sings but a song that other hearts have sung.
 Sweet, sweet thy promise—but for days of toil.
 Sweet is but frail ; thy words at random flung.

 “Nay, ask us not whose voice thou art, whose power
 Sings us thy songs. They are our mother’s dower.
 Who can withdraw himself from out his times,
 His thoughts all his, all isolate his hour ?

"Come one, come all ! life is at best alloy ;
Burn out the dross, the fiery gold employ !

The best is but a dismal jollity ;
Yet take the best, and, if thou mayst, enjoy !

"That we are here is but a cursèd spite ;
Yet, being here, there's still wrong use and right
Of our poor day, too long at either end—
Dull in its dawn, and dismal in its night.

"Shallow is boyhood, stagnant is old age ;
And youth itself is but a half-way stage
On a dull journey at an ill-kept inn.
Yet come ye down its paltry joys to gage.

"This body's use is but a moment ours,
And, at the best, but little are its powers.

'Tis folly then to husband it or them.
Drink up your bins ! the wine is light, and sours.

"Sickness and pains like ghosts on either hand

In a long filmy lane anear us stand,

Jeering and mocking as we pass between.

Lo, you may see them there, the grisly band.

"Joys dance between them ; but they nod and leer

At the vile spectre-watchers standing near.

Their floating gauzes ivory limbs reveal ;

And not a limb that from all blotch is clear.

"Yet come, enjoy ! for what is else to fill

The empty spaces of a life so ill ?

Quaff deep the cup ; though foul the wine with

lees,

It warms the heart, that fear and dulness chill.

"What hopeless purpose does the fool propose

To brighten life ? We live, and all he knows

Is that a little blast comes puff, and dark

Is where the flame was—out in stench it goes.

"Oh—to please him—praise God, if God there be—
But sing the praise ; give life some melody.

One consolation keeps the voice in tune—
There is no soul ; come death, at last we're free."

IV

i.

Heavenly hope
does not deceive.

Oh, all my being revolts and cries its need
For work in hope, some heavenly task to speed.

Ah, heaven ! ah, heaven ! Thine is no fancied smile
Of love that kindles at each better deed.

It is my Soul that so revolts and flings
Itself in tears before thy feet, and clings

Unto thy throne ; and, there with hope renewed,
Soft as it goes about its labour sings.

Thine is no tongue to mock with idle word,
And lure nowhither those fond hearts that gird

Their loins to labour at the morning call
Not all obey, though all the cry have heard.

Nor is it shame, O Soul, such loss to fear
 As heaven's lost love ; and, hark, the call was clear.

Cry ye and laugh ye ? Nay, arise ! arise !
 Why say ye 'tis the wind in dreams we hear ?

ii.

Lead on ! lead on ! though dark the way ahead,
 And shifts the cloud at every step I tread,
 Showing the mountain-path ; and dim below
 Groans the black river in its barren bed.

Heaven does not
 mock mankind.

And, far behind, the mists have rolled away ;
 The winding path adown the middle day
 Far, far, in coils creeps round the lessening hills,
 Though on the forward path the clouds e'er stay.

Not of ourselves we found the hidden track ;
 We of ourselves all hope in guidance lack.

And shall the hand that ever leads us on
 Have other hand that ever keeps us back ?

Should man all perish, soul as well as clay,
 Though still he stepped upon a loftier way,
 When the last race should reach the journey's
 end

Blank were the bourne, and scoffs the labourer's pay.

V

The Soul takes
 courage from
 the Dawn.

Then, O my Soul, arouse ! arouse ! thy Fair,
 Morn, walks already by the hedgerows where

 The path runs round the corn ; and, oh, her own
 Alluring laughter in the dew-sweet air !

Shake off thy evil dreams. The sweat of night
 That visions bring, our prisoned minds to fright,

 Wash off in crispest water from the well,
 And deck thyself. Morn calls "Come, heart's
 delight !"

Thy own, she calls with love's sweet liberty

"Come down, O love, beloved laggard, I

Wait thee amid thy lawns and flowers; that
should

Not wait, were I not thine so utterly."

Then, O my Soul, arouse! and lover's speed

Brush all dream-traces from thy brows, and lead

Thee to her one gay-solemn kiss of morning;

Who more withholds—but they for after-need.

Thy dreams with her thou'lt turn to mockery:

"O foolish Soul, to dream that thou shouldst die,

Who art, with Morning, of immortal breed,

For ever young, Love's own eternally.

"O foolish one, why shouldst thou die, the sole,

Who dearest art in all creation's roll,

To die where nothing dies, nor form nor sound

Nor breath nor light, but moves to endless goal?

“Thine is the lasting future ; thee the years
Shall slow perfect—if perfect thou through tears,
Nor joys alone. And in thy sorrows see
No bitter heaven, no cold remorseless spheres.”

Yea, ill beginnings tender Time shall take,
And out of them a gracious ending make.

How ill the steps that once we trod, in shame,
We shall return ; nor Time shall one forsake.

Then, O my Soul, arouse ! arouse ! thy Fair,
Morn, walks already by the hedgerows where

The path winds round the corn ; and, oh, her own
Alluring voice rings in the sweet fresh air.

VI

Our ill beginnings tender Time shall mould
To gracious endings, when the years have rolled

The soul may be
purified in suc-
cessive lives,
losing identity
in purity.

 Their destined circles round the starry skies,
That unto each his arc of life unfold.

And, ah, my Soul, how ill, and, ah, how long
The interweavings of those orbs, among

 Their threaded gold and shade, ere out of thee
Heaven shall have burnt the last alloy of wrong ;

And by the hand that has thy truth assayed,
True metal, thou be heavenly vessel made,

 With beauteous scrolls o'erwrought and smiling
 figures,

And in thy bosom jewelled bliss be laid !

But, ah, how long, my Soul, and, ah, how ill
Thy metal ! and the fire that tries thee, still

 A thousand-fold in lives relit, would leave
No perfect ore the perfect mould to fill.

And whose the telling, Soul, when heaven's deep
flame

Has burnt the dull away, that thou the same

(How small before, how lesser now !) shalt be ;

And Heaven shall call thee from the rest by name ;

And thou shalt be no vessel—thou the throne,

Footstool, and sceptre, crown, and orb, and own

No single part, where all are interfused ;

And none be self, and all be heaven's alone ?

VII

On sudden wing the birds 'mid blossoms fly

—O Souls in heaven ; O sun and summer sky !—

For summer's come, summer is come, is come ;

And all is gay, and, oh, how gay am I !

Summer is come, is come, my summer come,

And music. Thine no more, with fingers numb,

Winter, to fumble on thy broken lyre,

Where half the harmonies of earth are dumb.

The soul rejoices
at the thought
of heaven,
whither its
coming may be
a return.

Now are the fruits, and, oh, the flowers, returned

—Ah, souls remet ; ah, kisses long long-yearned !—

For summer's come, summer is come, come, come ;
And joy is fully but in sorrow learned.

Far float the birds in summer sky they knew

How long ago, ere grief and winter due,

Summer is come once more, is come, come, come.
Heaven's summer lasts ; earth's summer days how few !

And butterflies on hovering choice are blown

—Ah, heaven long lost ; O joys though new, well
known !—

For summer's come again. O earthly summer,
With all thy sweets, there's sweeter still to own.

The bees go humming into honeyed flowers

—Summer of earth, thy sweets are drawn from
showers—

Summer is come again—Ah, come ! ah, come !
It comes not yet. How slow go winter's hours !

VIII

The soul longs
for personal
immortality.

Ah, quickening year, thou hast too early stirred

The tremulous impulse into song. The bird

Feels thy hand move upon its heart ; but, oh,
How long ere its full melody be heard !

And thou, O Soul, on summer plumes wouldst fly,
From where the shadows by the copses lie,

Beyond our sight into immediate heaven,
A lessening speck upon a cloudless sky ;

And where through paradise thy music floats,
Sweet mingling from all heaven's melodious throats,

Still in thy lesser tones and compass sing
In low accord thy own remembered notes ;

Nor lost in the general melody of song,
Unmarked, unheard, wouldst be amid the throng,

Where in that ordered choir of voices yet
Peculiar sweetness may to each belong.

Ah, flying Soul, and mayst thou yet remain
 Apart, though of, the choir ?—and shall again
 They warmly lie upon thy heart, and wipe
 With kisses out its graven score of pain ?

IX

Fain would the child be man, and from the years
 Pluck all the harvest of their bounteous ears.

Patient growth
 is needed.

O child, thou shalt be man at last, and eat
 Life's bread, whose flavour is the salt of tears.

Fain would a young man find a loving maid—
 The world stands still, has Love his feet delayed.*

“ Oh, come in haste ! for dull is all my world,
 And love were sun, and I am cold in shade.”

And hast thou come, O Love—an hour away
 From thee a decade is of slow delay ;

And every minute is a double moon,
 And every second long as summer's day.

And, other Love, with fainter smile to lure
Them that for thee labour and years endure ;

When thou art gained at last, if ever gained,
And men be wise—Oh, are thy smiles more sure ?

Ah, thou, too eager in thy small desire,
Too loath to strive, too ready, thou, to tire,

Through long delays be thou content to see,
How slow thy steps, that each to each be higher.

We fain would pass the clouds to heaven's high door,
Through windy blue of loftier skies, before

Our wings are grown, who through long days
must bide

Of lower flights, ere we are plumed to soar.

X

Behold the heaven of stars, that softly rise,
And fall altern, where each a jewel lies,
 Upon the broidered robe, that
 folds a breast at ease,
All steeped in calm, on nightly skies !

Rest desired.

Beneath the temple-roof of earthly fane,
There's peace on earth, in music's heavenly pain ;
 But 'neath His temple-dome, where
 hang the stars alight,
What pealing choirs, and organ-strain !

The cunning builder's hands, in airy stone,
On earthly roof, have Gothic pendants strown ;
 But hang the pendent-drops, in
 perfect poise aloft,
From fretted roof of night alone.

The peace that garish haunts and daylight flees,
Oh, dim by night, the dreamy watcher sees.

There by the milky way, one
glimpse of her is ours,
Where floats her veil, upon the breeze.

The far cicala-drone, now day is spent,
Still rings my feet, which way my steps be bent,
In e'er receding song, that
ne'er is far nor near ;
And hums of rest, and night's content.

O all ye starry worlds, that shun our skies
By garish day, and meet our tired eyes
But when our work is done, move
ye in peace etern ;
Nor labouring suns for you arise ?

XI

Wasted Years of youth, oh, have pity, bring

Man's advance
is slow.

Back to us from the west, on turning wing,

Those earlier hours of our neglectful day ;

The wasted days of our unheeded spring.

Long were life to the wise—but who is wise ?—

And short to me. And half a lifetime lies

Behind me, with but little done worth showing.

Turn again, O Youth, from the western skies !

Not again would I with bright eyes distraught

Choose amiss from thy many gifts, and caught

'Mid gleam and gleam, neglect thy duller gold.

Why, O Youth, must we choose with choice untaught ?

Grey art thou, O Earth, and thy many tears

Have marked thee old among thy kindred spheres.

And slow thy child beside thee drags his steps—

How slow the steps by which to heaven he nears !

Worn art thou, O Mother ; thy fires abate—

How long canst thou his lingering footsteps wait ?

If he speed not, O Earth, thou wilt grow cold
Or e'er his feet be known by heaven's far gate ;

And all thy pilgrimage at last prove vain ;

And sore thy feet with uselessness of pain.

Grey art thou, O Mother, with many tears
Lest he, deform, the heights of heaven ne'er gain.

XII

Not by one narrow dale the Soul delays,
Or field ; nor wings one flight her length of days.

'Through open heaven and blue she soars aloft ;
Nor man shall plod for e'er on beaten ways.

Not to one world, beneath the nightly sky,
Where glow the lamps of stars, to heaven more nigh,
Shall she be e'er confined ; but leave her cage,
And raise her loftier wing, new worlds to try ;

The soul like a
bird will gladly
fly to new
scenes.

And mortal life there take on her again

—Oh, give her greater joy! give less of pain!—

And, low or higher as her deeds have been,
New form, or low or high, will there attain.

—How fresh the air, how far the woods below,
Where birds on breezes wheel, swift to and fro,

Or further leave the earth, and higher poise
On strength of outspread wings, moved rare and
slow!

The fields beneath lie ripening in the sun,
Where man must toil the day, from dawn begun,
Till eve shall drive him in; and still he fears
That morrow show his toils by night undone.

The golden fields are brodered by the green,
Where spreading forests close the fields between;
And o'er the woods, beyond, a circled plain
Where winding rivers flow, but dimly seen.

And low hills bind in cincture blue as air
 The wedded breast of earth, with promise fair,
 Not further distant than the clear eye sees ;
 Nor long ere beating wings may lift me there.

XIII

Then, O my Soul, arouse ! arouse ! thy Fair
 Smiles to thee from the throng around her, where
 The cedar boughs float level o'er the lawn,
 And all but thee her words, her laughter, share.

O moody Soul, O timid Soul, to stay
 For ever loitering 'mid the crowd, while they
 More kindly-seeming seek her side, and she
 'Mid smiles is wondering why thou keepst away !

O moody Soul, and weeping Heart, to fear
 That little beauty thine e'er to be dear
 To her, nor deeds e'er worthy of her love !
 She smiled ; O foolish Heart, then venture near !

The Soul takes
 courage again
 as at Heaven's
 welcome home.

And thou shall lead her willing from the throng,

'Twixt gravest cedars the slope lawns among,

To where the river smiling offers lilies ;

And she shall tell thee she has loved thee long ;

“ And why, O love,” will say, “ wast thou so strange,

So gloomily apart the throng to range,

As though thou thoughtst the years when thou
wast far

My love for thee, dear early friend, could change ?

“ When first we kissed—nay, I so small a maid—

Thou mayst remember—love, that kiss has stayed

For ever singing music at my heart ;

Whose tones I heard, though not the words it said ;

“ A song too moving-sweet in my heart-strings !

(O Love, how soft upon my breast thy wings,

And warm upon my neck thy silver down ;

Too soft, O Love, the mood thy wooing brings !)

“Thou for these absent years art fairer e’en
Than e’er before, that fair hast ever been ;

And on thy brow a loftier manliness,
And through thine eyes a graver soul is seen.

“Now your dull emptiness, O absent Years,
Is turned to fulness ; into joy your tears ;
For nobler is my love returned to me,
And bright the sun shines on my night of tears.”

Thus she shall tell thee she has loved thee long,
Beyond the cedars the slope lawns among,

There where the river smiling offers lilies ;
And soft shall lead thee back to join the throng.

Then, O fond Heart, arouse ! arouse ! thy Fair
Turns, yea, she turns to thee her smile from where

The cedar boughs sway level with the lawn,
And all but thee her words, her laughter, share.

XIV

i.

With pensive motion walks the maiden Night,
And e'er alone, through shadows or moon-light,

The soul may
return to the
earth as does
the dew, all
identity being
lost.

And muses ever what may true love be—

Her breast is bare, sweet Love; why stays thy
flight ?

See, she has taken from her neck of snow

Her silver veil, free passage thee to show ;

And in her musing mood she slacks her hand

And idly drops the veil, and turns to go.

There in the morning, threaded all of gems

(None half so fair in kingly diadems !)

Of web transparent, woven in heavenly looms,

Beneath our tread it lies, that heaven contemns.

The jewelled dew lies white upon the grass,
 Where trees still drowse and deepest shadow was ;
 Till lines of radiance, from the low-poised sun,
 Creep to the steps we make, as here we pass.

From lawn and river, hanging trees, and flowers,
 Where strays the Sun, amid the laughing Hours,
 Their goblets gold abrim with gleaming dew
 They fill, to suage their friends, the distant
 Showers.

So back and forward pass the drops of dew,
 And, soiled on earth, in heaven grow pure anew ;
 And in the evening, with the wingèd shadows,
 They kiss the fields again, that erst they knew.

ii.

The sun, that silent dreams half-hid below
 The curving western arc, is sinking slow.

Too soon the golden clouds are turned to grey ;
 Then breathes the night, and cold all colours grow.

The soul-ele-
 ment may
 change at the
 infusion of each
 new soul. To
 darken it were
 ill.

But there, a fairer cloud, a steady sun,
Beyond our mortal view, where night is none !

Fresh-woven, the web of cloud is coloured still,
But changes e'er, of fleeting spirits spun.

And, low, a tremulous shock through Evening's song,
When each new soul arrives, to join the throng ;

And, swift, the woven colours flash their hues,
When pure the soul, and bright the bright among.

But, ah, a lower note pervades the praise,
A duller tone of love, and small delays ;

And change the cloudy hues to darker grain !
Oh, ill, most ill, to blot those gleaming rays !

Wide heaven, in calm serene at close of day,
Now windy rain at last has blown away,

Spreads fair, and golden clouds are left behind,
And pause to smile with rosy-bright delay.

iii.

Or the soul-ele-
ment may ab-
sorb the identi-
ty only of the
truly pure.

Child from heaven, thine eyes are like cloud-isles
That lie in seas, where Morning dwells and smiles.

Eyes of heaven, veiled light more radiant-soft
Gleams not where Eve her shrine with blossoms
piles.

Ever turning, the worlds and heaven between,
In age-long interchange the soul has been.

Starward soaring, she flutters back to earth,
Till, thoroughly tested, perfect she be seen.

Distant planets are near to her broad wing ;
Nor to our bounded shores her spread sails cling.

Beating swiftly, her pinions gleam in suns
Where neighbour systems guide their worlds in
ring.

Isolated the soul heaven's may not be ;
Nor be her lonely fate from wandering free.

Drops of heaven thick lain in earth-borne clouds,
Ye still are one while one your purity.

Radiant Evening, serene at close of day,
When windy rain at last has blown away,
Spreading widely, oh, lift but golden clouds !
And timeless Heaven be then ; and, Evening, stay !

XV

When, O my Soul, wilt thou arise at morn,
And with good heart survey thy chamber lorn ;

The Soul is
bidden to take
courage again
as a poor youth
from spring.

Nor blush in shame thy long-worn weeds to wear ;
But trim, with what thou hast, thyself adorn ;

And briskly step into the early street,
That echoes emptily to hurrying feet,

Then lies and dreams a quiet day, until
Its lighted lamps slow homeward footsteps greet ?

On, through long lines of blinking houses, where
Unfriendly windows at each other stare

Nor know thy feet that daily pass them by,
Nor for thy thoughts, thy foreign sorrows, care.

“ Day after day, in slow perpetual round,
Moves on mechanically, and I am bound

To the long spokes of the revolving wheel,
Whose throbbing chains o'erthrow my heart with
sound.

“ And seasons, like the bells in restless night,
That e'er the timid wings of Sleep affright,

Clang out the passage of unending time—
Oh, could their tale but cease, and it were light !”

Nay, like a lad of some high-hearted race,
Take thou Fate's blows upon a smiling face ;

Though high thy tears within thy throat, thy
soul

Still strong to swallow down the tears' disgrace ;

And, smitten low, prompt rise again, and still
Ward what thou mayst with lesser strength and skill.

Thy firm-kept lips and steady eyes shall draw
From conquering Fate that thou hast fought not ill.

The low sun on the eastern housetops lies,
And high through April morn its beams arise ;
Then like a fan its gathered rays unfold,
And slow descend to earth, through feathery skies.

Then lift thy thoughts from the grey streets below,
Where men in streams towards one dull river flow !

Lift thou thine eyes above the housetops, where
Spring's heaven-graved characters with promise
glow !

“ Ah, would the world might pause its round in spring,
When, in the park I know the sweet birds bring
Fresh tales from heaven ; and I if early risen
May bide awhile to hear what news they sing !

"Then would I glad arise and bold, each morn,
 Nor would my high heart see my lodging lorn ;
 But I would deck myself in cheerful wise,
 Nor shame be mine to wear my weeds long-worn."

XVI

i.

Oh, vivid dreams, in hours when Silence leads
 The Soul, her arm about her neck, to meads,
 Where, sitting in the shade, she fills her ear,
 That melts to song, nor more the singer heeds !

Oh, vivid dreams, in which the air is fanned
 By soughing wings that angel forms expand,
 And mount aloft on gladly beating pinions,
 Or furl their plumes, and by the dreamer stand !
 And as they upward soar, or slowly fold,
 Where they have poised on earth, their wings of gold,
 The angel bands high call each other greeting ;
 Or, of the heaven they love, soft converse hold.

The world of
 spirits seen in
 moments of con-
 templation.

Souls that again upon our earth alight,
 Reborn, awhile their smile of heaven is bright ;
 And out of infant eyes their gaze is still
 On distant fields, whence late they winged their
 flight.

Oh, vivid dreams, in which the air is stirred
 By sough of wings, that waking ear ne'er heard ;
 When angels soar on moving fans of gold,
 Or slowly furl their plumes, like poising bird !

ii.

On fairest fabric, wove of painted thread,
 Where pricked the needle, by deft fingers sped,
 Bright forms, in seeming, move at airy ease,
 Though in the silk for ever prisonèd.

The visions of
 contemplation
 may be but
 dreams.

Bright figures all the woven web, along
 The corridor where pace the fancies, throng ;
 That converse hold, or silent lean and gaze
 At the far even-glow, the clouds among.

Of dreams is woven the patterned tapestry,
And busy thoughts the painting needle ply.

Blow, winds of day, along the corridor !
The pictures dim, the walls in ruin lie.

Oh, dreams, fair dreams, but woven of changing hues ;
Of colours fair as those the skies diffuse ;

Dipped in the setting sun, or pearly dawn,
And transient as the gleam of morning dew !

XVII

i.

God rests.

The hand of God lies ever now at rest,
Nor shall again to labour be addressed,
But still reclines along the enfolding throne ;
Or to his cheek in thought divine is pressed.

He labours not with ever shifting tread,
From row to row of golden vessels, spread
On the white pavements of his palace-floor,
That each with perfume be replenishèd.

His feet in heaven tread beneath murmuring trees
(Harps where the winds attune their harmonies)

By grassy water-meads ; and teaches still
Truth to great souls, whose love has earned their
ease.

Rest is in this, that all is perfect done,
And perfect is our mortal world begun ;
From the first impulse of the hand divine
Orb within orb its destined sphere to run.

In our low world, that still must forward tend,
Our joy is but what ill is done to mend.

When naught is ill, and all is perfectness,
Rest shall be ours at last, and labour end.

Work ! work ! not long the hours that daylight
spares,

And each with heaven above his labour shares—

Lo, Heaven's own task is done, but heaven's
content

Is in his heart who home, from labour, fares.

ii.

Life proceeds
from one im-
pulse.

The wheels of life with interwoven speed

Whirl their chained circles, nor the circles heed ;

And throb and clamour between shaken walls,
Nor second impulse to their motion need.

Day draws to evening, evening sighs to night,

When Peace her taper moves, the stars to light ;

But all the windows of the shaken walls
With redder gleams, beneath the stars, are bright.

Night walks in heaven her round, and cries the hour.

Her moving lantern sheds a silver shower ;

And as she streams it on the ruddy panes,

Her heart is moved to tears ; her pace is slower.

The busy crowds, that throng at chilly morn

To the bare portals, up the steps are borne,

And, mid the clamour of the ceaseless wheels,

Take the long task from other hands outworn.

The wheels of life shall thunder on until

The woven fabric may His palace fill,

There to adorn His airy walls with sheen.

Ah, would the circles of the wheels were still !

XVIII

Care walks with Age, and prudent speech delays

Their heavy tread along accustomed ways ;

Age lays his hand upon the arm of Care,

And as he tells his fears he, sighing, stays.

Heaven does
not turn back
the soul to an
earthly body.

Care walks beside old Age with heavy feet,
Nor lifts his eyes above the pavèd street ;

Where, unobservantly, he nothing views—
Or low and evil eyes his glances meet.

Hope walks with lifted eyes, the clouds to view,
Where in their peace he may his peace renew—

Lo, heaven with restfulness our skies fulfilled,
That with their calm we might our souls imbue.

The soul for ever heavenward turns her eyes
—Though here she prisoner in fetters lies,

That bind her eager feet. Oh, break her bonds,
Her wings through ever higher heavens shall rise.

Nor shall she, glad escaped, her moments fill
With anxious downward glance to earth until

The lure is ready and the bonds reweave,
That once she wore, and she remembers still.

No hand shall be upon her shoulders laid,
Nor urgent fingers furl her wings displayed,
Nor twine in hers to lead her down, nor draw
The usury of debt her sighs have paid.

The hand of God lies ever now at rest,
Nor shall again to labour be addressed,
To lead for ever back the mounting soul,
Her feathered wings, new-spread of gold, depressed.

The wheels of life with interwoven speed
Twine warp and woof. And shall the fabric, freed
From the last wheel, a later motion seize,
Under the wheels again its web to lead?

XIX

The soul of the
begotten draws
through its
begetters only.

They are not dead, our selves of time gone by,
Though they in long-forgotten places lie,

Where from their graves the rain has trod their
names,

And feet of laughing days, 'neath summer sky.

And I am he, who lived in older days,

'Neath earlier kings, and followed antique ways ;

And earlier still in unremembered climes,
That bound in linkèd rings his wandering gaze.

From out mine eyes, that day-time visions see,

He dreams upon the soul that now is free,

And once was his, ere winged away it flew ;
Nor aught shall lure it back, from liberty.

They tread in us upon their changèd dust,

And we in turn, though in the coffin thrust,

Shall 'neath the upper sun still sit, and muse
On gravèd slabs, whereon our names shall rust.

XX

Bright-wove, or dark-wove, or of mingled strands
(And 'cross the dusky threads lie golden bands),

Future lives are
not on any
earth.

The web has fallen from the utmost wheel,
That spins for ever where it moving stands.

His hand lay once upon the involvèd wheels,
And, throbbing, each the first impulsion feels,
When all was still, and slow he moved them
round,
Till each should learn the orb, where yet it reels.

And other wheels shall take the earth-woven soul,
That in the skies above all silent roll ;
And fairer patterns stamp than earth has seen,
Whose beauty partial is, but heaven's the whole.

Thou com'st not back, O Soul, to earth again,
 Or be thy web of dull or purple grain,
 Bright-wove, or dark-wove, or of mingled
 strands
 (And 'cross the golden threads lies dusky stain).

XXI

Truth is hidden.

O busy world, thy cries so roll within
 My hollow-vaulted ears, thy traffic-din
 That rumbles through thy streets, so
 numbs my soul with noise,
 Few words of heaven I e'er can win !

O busy world, my narrow room is nigh
 The beating of thy feet, that fain must ply
 (No gladder than mine ears, whose
 peace they tramp away)
 Their hurried trade, 'neath leaden sky !

Still hours how few, when thou mayst take thine
ease,

And in my room, above, thy echoes cease,
Or but a random step may come, on
holiday ;

And thou have rest, and I release !

Nay, Soul, have done ! for thou art blessed to own
Thy narrow chamber where, thy window thrown
Full open to the sky, when
eve at last has come,
Heaven's starry peace thy night has known.

Still hours how few, when thou mayst take thine
ease,

And in thy lodging high the echoes cease ;
Yet, graceless Soul to weep ! hast
thou no peace at heart,
Nor from the noise, by night, release ?

O busy world, thy cries, thy traffic-din,
Thy ever falling feet, that sound within
The rooms above thy streets, beat
out the sounds of heaven,
That vainly strive our ears to win.

XXII

i.

The heart cries
for rest.

Change ! change ! to me at times all seems
A weariness of change, a quest of dreams.

We grasp the brightness that has lured the
hand—

Our fingers drop moon-gems and water-gleams.

Rest ! rest ! ah, let us choose a spot

On a full brimming river-bank,

And not strive any more ; learn to be still,

And if our quest must be, be it a while forgot ;

Where the slope meadows leave the further side,
And summer-leisurely ascend,
And bide, after a little easy toil,
'Neath trees, that reach our feet here double in the
tide ;

Where, by our hands, the grasses turn to grey
Above the greener blades,
And the winds sway them to and fro, one follow-
ing other,
Up our slope of the bank, and over the meadows
away.

Let us choose some such resting spot, and know
That all is well, without, within us ;
No achings of self-reproach, nor spur to striving,
Nor sense of need, nor need, further to go.

So be it 'tis apart from heaven that here
We, who once strove now loiter.

Very near is heaven, on all sides—nor only
without :

One bolt but shuts the heart, and that is fear.

Then let us choose for rest this river spot,
Where heaven, well-pleased, is on all sides ;
And not only without, but in the heart ;
And all is heaven's self. Change be, and toil, for-
got.

ii.

Yet labour is
high privilege.

Yet, yet, it is no labour that is asked of us, in way
of striving ;
At most to arise,
And choose an even fairer
Spot than this river-bank, where we have sat ;

To be better and better ; to draw nigh heaven,
Not in outward comfort alone, by easy degrees,

But throughout a pure heart
To welcome heaven more and more fittingly.

We do not pity, now we are men grown,
Children their need of learning ;

And our own labour in teaching old tasks long-
mastered
Is harder than theirs, and is our love shown.

Nor was the thing learned always my true prize,
But to have laboured, to have smothered sighs,
To have used will, and strained the mind
given—

And, oh, the praise was sweet in the child's eyes.

If we are children we must needs go on learning
And every sigh stopped is step won—

And, ah, perhaps again shall there come praise
Sweet as by boyhood heard, that is long gone.

XXIII

i.

All living things
claim immortality.

While all the world, a little mile away,
Goes rattling on, astir through work's long day,
Here breezes ever move, to
softest notes attuned;
And move the blades, with answering sway.

Lean back your head to touch the sloping ground,
And bid your ears forget the insistent sound
Of all those whirring wheels, of all
those feet that tramp,
For ever driven, in narrow round.

While all the world, that works in fetters chained,
Is task-compelled, for prize so seldom gained,

Here swing the leaves above, here
sway the blades below,

The summer through, all peace attained.

Lie here outstretched at ease, and watch the sky,
Where silver clouds come up, and soft float by ;

Or rest thy up-propped head upon
thy hand to watch,

Who strikes the stream, and slow draws nigh.

I heard here long ago, a summer-time,
A voice as soft as if belled flowers should chime,

That beat from airy towers ; and,
silent, still they boom,

Within my ears, an echoed rhyme.

“ We live ! we live ! we live ! as he ; nor more
Shall die, than he shall die, whom woman bore ;
Our forms are not ourselves, nor
hand that plucks the flower,
Holds all the sweet that bloomed before.

“ We live ! we live ! O Wind, that passest by,
And sweep'st the clouds across our summer sky,
We live as mortals live ; nor
more than men shall we,
When winter comes, all fading die.”

Here heard I long ago, where flows the stream,
Beside our feet, and swaying eddies gleam,
The Wind, that has no form, nor
death may know, nor change,
In answer speak, as soft as dream.

“While all the world that is to fetters chained,
Still labours on, for prize so rarely gained,
Here swing your leaves above, here
 sway your blades below,
Through summer day, your peace attained.”

ii.

Here heard I long ago all nature cry

But this is de-
nied.

“We live ! we live ! nor more than men shall die ;”

And soft the Wind replied, that

 knows nor death nor change ;

Whose sighs are smiles, whose smile a sigh :

“I rose when first the atoms new-create

Swum all confused, when earth was grain in weight ;

Older than sun am I ; the

 universe I saw,

From mite to mite, accumulate.

“ Ere soft I rose at first, and breathed and stirred
My wings to tender flights, a voice I heard,
A voice so infinite, it
awed the furthest world,
And yet more sweet than evening’s bird;

“ That has but spoken once in all of time,
To us that dwell beyond heaven’s music-clime ;
But taught all things in germ their
tasks for aye to be ;
That all might ring as true bells chime.

“ Though ye, as all, are from the sole divine,
And naught can lie without the strict design,
Ye are but come from Him, and
of His life divine
No further part is yours than mine.

“ And what is He sole lives—whose godhead dwells
 In, ah, so few their hearts, and on compels ;
 That ever nigher draw, to Him
 that is themselves,
 And bears their cross ; and comfort tells.

iii.

“ Ere soft I rose at first, a voice I heard,
 Slow adding note to note and word to word ;
 More calm than silent songs, that
 well in heart content,
 Whose harmonies by eve are stirred.

It is denied
 to all but those
 who become
 God-like.

“ ‘ Here in all things am I, and here, divine,
 I dwell in all parts of my vast design ;
 My spirit everywhere, though
 it may latent dream,
 Still breathes from Me, and still is mine.

“ ‘In all am I ; my spirit e’er shall be
(Or lain in bonds of dream, or waking free)

In all created things ; and,
waking, still shall move,
Or fast or slow, its steps to Me.

“ ‘All of divine, that shall awake and rise,
Though long the dream has been, and strong the ties ;
That bind their heavy feet, shall
be again with Me—
That am themselves, and sigh their sighs.

“ ‘So shall I gather gladly up my own,
As slowly Time from year to year has flown;
And be begirt around with
them that like are found,
The Like with like—who am alone.’ ”

XXIV

Hush ! hush ! the beat of wings is in my ears,
That faintly grows from far, and swifter nears.

Heaven ima-
gined.

O broad white wings, surging strong and softly !
I hear the sough, but cannot see for tears.

I will not say, who hear those surging wings,
That love remembered never earthward brings

Them that we loved, to us that once were dear,
Whose necks are warm, where yet the memory
clings.

Then, oh, heaven's greeting with the newly come ;
The broken words, the tears that tell the sum

Of brimming joy, too keen for smiles, too deep
For words ; that grips the heart, and holds it dumb !

And long calm converse, passion passing o'er,
In happy groups, on loftiest themes, before
 All that were best and wisest in the worlds,
Where ocean-time has beat, to furthest shore !

To learn by slow degrees, as soul may bear,
The good that perfect is, and everywhere ;
 Until the brimming cup shall come from God's
Own hands, who bids us quaff ; and we shall dare !

And Time, at rest, shall there forget to raise
And drop his finger, here that never stays,
 But beats impatient on the table, till
Man heeds at last his call, nor more delays.

Words cannot paint what eye has seen, to seem
What faint the eye beholds, the partial scheme ;
 And of the bright that lies beyond the rack
Of clouds, we see at eve a broken gleam.

XXV

Then, O my Soul, arouse ! arouse ! and bear
Fresh fruits and flowers to her table, where

The Soul takes
courage as the
servant of the
more blessed.

She sits so often with the dreamy eyes,
That gaze on realms, whose sight thou canst not
share,

Nor thine to grasp in full the joy in song
She sings, as soft she moves her flowers among ;
That ripples through a peaceful land, more fair
Than thou canst dream, whose eyes are dimmed
with wrong.

Not in thine own small limits, Soul, to house
The larger spirit, that her face endows
With heavenly similitude ; but thine
To serve her hands, whose touch heaven thee allows.

For, O my Soul, arouse ! be thine good cheer,
Though thou no part of high heaven hast ; nor fear
But who is servant unto her may be
Some little measure unto heaven dear.

Then, O my Soul, arouse ! arouse ! and bear
With cheerful heart thy happy service, where
She moves more softly with the dreamy eyes,
More near, for thee, those realms, thou mayst not
share.

XXVI

Truth is hidden.

The bell has tolled, and, in its tolling, I
Hear questionings of immortality.

The wings of Time beat soft upon the air,
Whence carrying us, and whither, as they fly ?

A TRANSLATION OF VIRGIL'S POLLIO.

“ Chanter of the Pollio, glorying
in the blissful years again to be,
Summers of the snakeless meadow,
unlaborious earth and oarless sea.”

Tennyson, To Virgil.

[This poem was written avowedly in B. C. 40, the year of Pollio's consulship and of the Peace of Brindisi, which was negotiated for Octavian (afterwards Augustus) by Pollio and Mæcenas and which put an apparent end to the struggle of Octavian and Antony. Critics dispute the immediate occasion of the poem, but this much is obvious, that, though addressed to the consul Pollio, it was written in honour of his master the Triumvir Octavian. It would appear to be in the nature of an Epithalamium to the Triumvir, under whose patronage Virgil had lately placed himself. Octavian's marriage took place about the time of the Peace, and a son might be anticipated by the poet. One may compare the anticipation by Tennyson in the Epithalamium at the end of his *In Memoriam* in the lines—

" Star and system rolling past,

A soul shall draw from out the vast,

And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,

Result in man, be born and think,

And act and love, a closer link

Betwixt us and the crowning race."

The Peace of Brindisi gave to Octavian Italy and the West, and placed the centre of the Roman world in his hands. His already assured supremacy over his remaining rivals, the orientalised Antony, the feeble Lepidus, and the barbarised younger Pompey, was clearly seen by the poet. The end of the Civil Wars was indeed not quite come: another Argo yet must sail, possibly to be directed by Octavian against the younger Pompey, still dangerous at sea; another Troy must fall, and with it possibly the Asiatic rule of Antony—Lepidus in Africa was not worth a figure, even if an appropriate one could be found. These triumphs the poet anticipated for his master during the childhood of his son. Meanwhile, under the rule of Augustus peace after war should gradually change the world, "the world's great age begin anew;" until, with the manhood of this child of hope, "the golden years" of the earth's prime should return in full.]

TO POLLIO,

Sing we, O Muses of Sicilian vales,
To themes more high than pastoral underwoods !
The vineyard and the lowly tamarisk
Delight not all. If still of fields we sing,
They shall be fields worthy a consul's tread.

Now is at hand the age of old fore-sung
In hymn prophetic ; and the arc of time,
Its totalled years attained, begins anew.
Now Justice, heavenly maid, returns ; return
Saturn's prime laws ; a race new from high heaven
Comes down. Favour the babe now moving to
The birth, with whom first shall the iron end,
First shall the golden age rise, for all men !
Favour him, chaste Lucina, travail-goddess,
Dian, that with Apollo now shalt reign !
Thou also, Pollio, ruling, thou shalt see

This glory of the age come in, the great
Months to their course proceed ; with thee our aid,
Though remnant of past sin yet stalk the world,
Shadows of harm, the lands 'scape their long fears.
He shall accept the life of gods, shall see
Associate with gods heroic men,
Evident himself to all ; and he shall rule,
His father's virtues his, a world appeased.
And for thee, babe, her first child-gifts to thee,
The Earth shall spread spontaneous unto man,
Tendrils of ivy straying every-whither,
Balms and sweet roots and gleaming evergreens.
Themselves the goats shall bring their heavy udders
Home to the milking, nor flocks shall lions fear.
Thy very cradle shall be turned to flowers.
The serpent too shall die, the traitor plant
Shall die, that poisons ; and Assyrian balsam

Grow sweet for all. But when the poet-lays
Of heroes thou canst read, and thy sire's deeds,
And mayst perceive what thing may virtue be,
Then shall the earth, to higher gifts advancing,
Grow yellow with fair corn, the ruddy grape
Hang from wild brambles, and the rugged oak
Drip dew of honey. Even then shall linger
Some remnant of the earlier sin, and bid
Men tempt the sea in ships, and build them walls
To towns, and wound the earth with the ploughed
furrow.

Another Tiphys shall arise, a new
Argo shall bear her hero-crew ; new wars
Shall be, and unto Troy again be sent
A great Achilles. Thereafter, when thy age
Has made thee man, the very trafficker
Shall quit the sea, nor sailing pine shall change

Its barter : and each world shall bear all things.
The ground shall know no harrow, nor the vineyard
The reaping-hook ; the stalwart plougher shall
Set free his bullocks from the yoke ; the wool
Shall aid no more the varied dyes deceive,
But in the meadows shall the ram change fleece,
Sea-purple or the crocus-root ; and scarlet
Shall clothe spontaneously the pastured lambs.
“ Such shall the ages run ! ” thus to their spindles,
One by immutable Law, the Fates have sung.

Come—for the time is nigh—come to great
honour,

Dear offspring of the gods, O infant Jove !
Behold ! the arc of the vast universe
In expectation stoops, the lands, the long
Track of the sea, the heavens profound. Behold,
All things give welcome to the approaching age !

Oh, should to me such portion of long years
Be given, such heaven's afflatus as may serve
To tell thy deeds, not me in songs shall he,
Orpheus himself, excel, not Linus, though
His tuneful mother, his high sire, be there,
Calliopea for Orpheus, and for Linus
Lovely Apollo. Pan even, should he strive
With me, his Arcady for judge, Pan even
With Arcady for judge shall yield defeated.
Come, little babe, haste to the mother-arms,
And smile thy knowing ; for her months thy mother
Have laden with long toils. Come, little babe !
Who is not smiling-tender to his mother
Shall ne'er elected join the ranks of heaven ;
Nor feast with equal gods, nor goddess we d.

A TRANSLATION OF HOMER'S HYMN TO
PAN, THE GREEK SHEPHERD GOD.

Tell me, O Muse, oh tell, of Hermes' son,
Belovèd, footed like the goat, two-horned,
Lover of din ; who, where the trees lie dotted
Over the meadows by the banks of streams,
Stamps with a rout of dance-delighting nymphs !
These tread the precipice-edge no ibex climbs,
Loud pealing " Pan O ! " the shepherd's god, the
 maned,
Rough-crested, who the snowy mountain-necks
Obtained to rule, peaked hills, and bouldered ways.
He roams his close-screened woodland paths at will,

Or haply stray his feet by full-brimmed streams,
Or haply back to his impending hills,
Climbing a peak to view the pastured plains.
And oft he sweeps yon bright and distant range,
Oft marks his quarry in far-seeing hunt
Upon the skirted hills : when evening falls,
Returning solitary from the chase
He pipes sweet songs upon his reeds—the bird,
Who mid the leaves of blossom-sprinkled spring
Complaining pours her honey-gush of song,
Not him in melodies excels. At times
The sweetly shrilling mountain-nymphs with him
Beat foot upon the ground, in dance, in song,
Beside a fount of darkling waves, till echo
Fills up the glen far as the peaks aloft.
At times, be here, be there the dance, the god
Steals in, swift in the middle poises, his feet

Smiting the ground in rapid dance, and down
His shoulders hangs the red lynx hide ;—for he
Delights in dance to sweetly shrilling songs
On some rich meadow, where the crocus blooms,
With odorous hyacinths, so thick besprent,
That grass and flowers are indivisible.—
They hymn the happy gods and far Olympus :
Him above all they hymn, the Helper, Hermes,
The speedy messenger to all the gods ;—
Who dwelt awhile in this our Arcady,
The many-streamed, land of innumerable herds,
Where his Cyllenian temple-precincts lie.
There he, though god, pastured the woolly flocks,
Serving a mortal man—when love astir
Budded thro' all his heart, for our sweet maid,
Dryops' fair daughter, crowned with plaited hair.
There were his bounteous nuptials consummate,

There born to Hermes, in their halls, his son,
Marvellous-visaged from the first to see,
Goat-footed, two-horned, noisy, sweetest-laughter.
Up sprung the nurse in flight, and quit the child,
Fluttered with fear to see his bearded face,
Shrewd as a grown man's, as no babe's before.
But swiftly Hermes seized and lifted him,
And passing bounds, the god was pleased to see.
Up lightly to high heaven's abodes he flew,
And hid the babe in furs of the hill-hare,
And took his seat by Zeus and all the gods ;
And him revealed. Then all the gods were joyed,
But Bacchus joyed beyond the bounds of all :
And " Pan " they called him, " All," who all
delighted.

Hail then, O lord ! I sue thee with a song :

Thee and those others in my songs I sue.

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE.

(*Georgics*, IV, 418-529)

[The portion of the *Georgics* or Farming Poems from which these lines are taken is on the subject of Bee-keeping. The story of the shepherd-god Aristæus, which includes that of Orpheus and Eurydice, is one of the poet's digressions. Aristæus' bees have died: he complains to his mother, the water-nymph Cyrene, who shows him how to entrap the prophetic sea-god Proteus and learn from him the cause: Proteus reveals the cause in Aristæus' fault, which, later, is expiated.]

There is a vast sea-cavern in a cliff
Towering mountainous 'gainst years and waves,
That slow have worn into its side, where thunders
The first rush of the tide beneath the wind,
Sweeping beyond into far land-locked coves,
The safest harbourage upon those shores
And known of old to keels that flee the storm.

Within would Proteus lie, his form concealing
 In deepest shade behind a jutting rock.

Here the Nymph places (while the sea-god tarries
 In open seas) ambushed in shadow her son ;
 And soft retires invisible in the gloom.

It was the season when the dog-star flames,
 That parches India to thirst ; the sun
 Burning on high had clomb the middle heaven ;
 Dry were the meads, and hollow-banked the streams
 Gasp'd, and their mud baked in the heat of noon.
 Then Proteus issued from the waves and sought
 The wonted cave. Around him gambolling
 The herds that graze the broad plains of the sea
 Plunged, and the salt spray spurted under them.
 Asleep along the shore, each in its station,
 The sea-calves lie : he (by the shepherd's custom
 Upon the mountains, when the evening star

Leads back the kine from pasture to the fold,
And at the bleat of lambs the wolves prick ear)
Sits on a central rock, and counts his herd.

Soon as in Aristæus' power he lies
(He scarce had spread his old worn limbs to rest)
The youth leaps shouting on him ; swift he binds
With manacles him lying on the ground.
He not unmindful of his art's defence
Changes and takes a thousand marvel-forms,
Fire, beast to tremble at, and flowing stream.
But, when no crafty twist nor turn brings freedom
He yields, back-gliding to his proper form,
And with a human speech at last he cries :
“ Who then, O thou in shameless overbearing
Too great for e'en thy want of years, has bade
Thee break into my home ? What of mine needing
Com'st thou ?” But he : “ Thou knowest, Proteus,
knowest,

Though I were dumb, Thou canst not me beguile ;
Cease thou thy will to fraud. At heavenly bidding
I, ruined, come thy oracle to learn."

So spake he. Then the seer, in prophet-frenzy,
Rolling his eye-balls bright as gleams of sea,
'Twixt foaming lips thus loosed the Fates' reply :

 " Wrath is upon thee, wrath not undivine ;
And heavy sins thou dost with woes repay.
Stroke upon stroke, till the Fates stay their hands,
Shalt thou endure, while Orpheus urges them.
He suffered at thy hands all undeserved,
And bitterly he wails his Love that's gone.
For she, swift fleeing thee beside the stream,
Saw not (ah, Maid, so early doomed to die !)
The lurking river-snake before her feet
In the lush grass that lined the water-way.
Then all the chorus of her mates the Dryads

Filled with their grief the echoes of the hills ;
Wept Rhodopè's high walls, and steep Pangæa,
And all the martial land that Rhesus swayed ;
Wept the wild tribes, and wept the Hebrus river,
And wept Oríthyiá, once Athens' maid.
He on his hollowed lyre lost love consoling,
Of thee, sweet Spouse, of thee sang evermore,
By lone sea-shores ; of thee when day was dawning,
And with the day's departing still of thee.
Till he arose and even Dis' high portals,
That gape like jaws by Tænarus, he dared,
And trod the grove with dread and blackness stream-
ing,
On through the Shades, on towards the terrible king,
Whose heart no pity knows for human prayers.
And at his song the filmy dead were thrilled
Down to the lowest realms of Erebus,

Dim likenesses of them that loved the sun,
 Now crowding like the thousand birds that hide
 Among the leaves when vesper 'gins to gleam,
 Or wintry rain blows down from off the hills.
 Mothers were there and men, and hero-forms
 Whose large souls now have done with earthly things,
 And lads and maids that died too young to wed,
 Or, youth full entered on, they died and lay
 Decked on their biers before their fathers' eyes.
 These the black slimy shore and dreary reeds
 And loathly wave of dull Cocytus' marsh,
 Lying in circle round that realm, confine,
 And Styx beyond coils in his nine-fold stream.
 Nay, e'en the torture-chambers of the dead
 In lowest hell were silent at his song ;
 Still grew the Furies, and the snakes that wind
 Blue-black among the coilings of their hair ;

Gaping his triple jaws lay Cerberus ;

And the wind dropped that whirls Ixion's wheel.

And now his steps retracing every danger

Had he escaped; Eurydicè rewon

Back to the sunlit breezy world was coming,

Though still not with him, for she trod behind

(So hard a law had Proserpine devised);

When sudden madness whelmed the reckless lover,

Forgiven indeed, if Hell could but forgive.

E'en where the light of heaven's free world was glim-
mering

He paused (ah, heedless one, by love destroyed!)

And at Eurydicè, his own, looked back.

There was his toil all shattered, there was broken

The bond he gave to hell's un pitying lord,

And from afar over Avernus' marshes

The thunder-roll thrice muttering was heard.

Then cried she 'Ah, what madness, O my Orpheus

Such madness has destroyed both thee and me.

The cruel Fates summon me back, and, lo,

Already sleep o'erwhelms my reeling eyes.

And now, farewell ! They take me, out of darkness

Stretching weak hands to thee, no longer thine'.

She ceased, and from his vision softly fading,

As smoke that rising melts into the air,

Fled on her separate way ; nor e'er looked back

On him, left grasping at the intangible gloom,

And crying, of how much he still would say.

Nor Orcus' ferryman the border swamp,

That barred his steps, again would let him pass.

What should he do ? And whither should he turn,

Twice of his love forlorn ? What tears the Shades,

What prayers the Gods, might move to pity him ?

And she, cold soul, sailed o'er the Stygian stream,

Seven months, they say, by Strymon's lonely
river,

Upon the base of some cloud-tending hill,
Month after month, he wept in chilly caverns,
Spinning his sorrow into threads of song ;
And with his melody the tigers' hearts
Appeasèd were, and the stiff oaks bowed down.
So Philomela in a shadowy poplar
Weeping complains in song her rifled nest,
That the hard-hearted ploughman's eye has seen,
Who all unfledged has stole her brood ; and she
Weeps through the night, and, from her bough re-
peating
The song of her melodious misery,
Brims the wide circuit with complaining tears.
Nor other love could lure his soul away ;
Lonely he trod the Hyperbórean ice-fields,

And where the snow falls into Tanais' stream,
By lands clasped ever to Rhipæan chills,
Complaining of his lost Eurydicè,
And of the mockery of Dis's boon ;
Till the Ciconian matrons, scorned by him,
For that he honoured one alone, in rage
Of mystic rites divine and Bacchic orgy,
Rent all his limbs and flung them o'er the fields.
Then even, as the river Hebrus rolled
Midstream his head, torn from his marble shoulders,
' Eurydicè !' the wonted tongue unguided,
' Ah, sad Eurydicè !' in death exclaimed ;
And the banks echoed her adown the stream."

Thus Proteus spake, and ceasing glided down
Into the depths below the water-plain ;
And where he plunged a bubbling eddy whirled.

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